

Inward and Outward Sacrifices

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon highlights the essential balance between inward and outward sacrifices in the Christian faith, urging believers to actively serve others while maintaining spiritual integrity.

Scripture: Matthew 6:21, Matthew 25:40, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Galatians 6:2, Philippians 2:4, Hebrews 10:24-25, James 2:17, 1 John 3:17

Topics: "Discipleship", "Sacrifice"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the need for a balance between inward and outward sacrifices in the Christian life, warning against the tendency to focus solely on internal spirituality while neglecting practical acts of service and sacrifice for others. He points out that Jesus and the apostles exemplified this balance, demonstrating that true discipleship involves both personal commitment and outward action to bless others. Poonen challenges believers to examine their priorities, noting that what we prioritize often reveals our true worship, and cautions against the deception of thinking we are spiritually mature while living selfishly. He calls for a genuine commitment to sacrifice time, energy, and resources for the sake of the gospel and others, rather than succumbing to the comforts of modern life. Ultimately, he urges Christians to align their lives with the sacrificial example of Christ, moving beyond mere knowledge to a life of active love and service.

Transcript

It is true that many in Christendom have placed a greater emphasis on the external sacrifices, than on the inner sacrifice of taking up the cross, that the New Testament calls us to. But it is possible for us, in an over-reaction to that error, to go to the other extreme of living a life where all our sacrifices are only inward - and sometimes imaginary!!.

If Jesus had made only inward sacrifices, He would never have left heaven and come to this earth. And if His apostles had made only inward sacrifices, the gospel would have never gone further than Jerusalem!! Jesus and the apostles were balanced, and knew that God wanted them to make inward as well as outward sacrifices for the gospel's sake.

It is only those who are willing, like Jesus and the apostles, to go through hardship and inconvenience in order to bless others, who will be able to carry the burdens of others in prayer and to stand in the gap in prayer in the church today.

It is a great deception to imagine that we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus, or that we are sanctified and spiritual, if we are occupied only with our own needs and hardly ever sacrifice ourselves or our time in any way for others.

Jesus lived in such a way that others might be blessed and brought near to God. This is the new and living way that He has inaugurated for us.

That which we give priority to in our lives is usually a clear indication of what we really worship. If, for example, we never forget to eat or to sleep or to go to work, but find ourselves having forgotten to take time to hear God speak to us on many days, then food and sleep and money must certainly have become our gods.

How much of our time, energy and money are we willing to sacrifice for the Lord? We may find a false comfort in the fact that under the new covenant, we are not commanded to set apart one day in the week and 10% of our income for the Lord. Many who used to give 10% of their income to God when they were in the denominations, have now backslidden to the point where they give God almost nothing at all. This is certainly not the way that Jesus walked. Such a state of affairs has come about, because comfort and prosperity have become their gods.

Perhaps we don't lose our temper or lust after women now. That's good. But these can never be a substitute for the external sacrifices that should also be found in our lives, if we are to follow the Lord.

Many of us have now come to the place where we are able to explain the doctrine of 'victory over sin' better than the apostles themselves!! But we need to get a little more light on the utter selfishness that characterises our way of life.

Spiritual instability is often caused by the fact that a person's 'knowledge' leg is over 3 feet long while his 'life' leg is only about 1 or 2 inches long!! And he still spends his time seeking to stretch his 'knowledge'-leg!!! Despite the purest revelation of God's truth that he may have, his selfishness still remains uncrucified.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/inward-and-outward-sacrifices/>

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